

Tricia crop report, Week #16
Holland, April 18th, 2005

Current Condition

The heads were still strong enough last week but this can change quickly. With this cool weather the fruit load is increasing rapidly as setting continues but the ripening has slowed.

Three clusters are ready to be harvested. If there are two dark days in a row, we will see that the heads will get thin. With a few days of warmer and sunnier weather, the fruits will color quickly again. With the weather being unpredictable that we will have to take measures ourselves.

Night Temperature

The plant temperature at night has been lower than the air temperature during the cold weather of the last little while. Thus, increase the set-point a little, at least 0.5°C higher than normal. This should help speed up ripening.

Cutting Leaves

Because the fruits are staying on the plant longer, there are more clusters and therefore also more leaves on the plant. In such a situation, there is no problem with having three clusters exposed. The fruits will stay warmer with more air circulation in the crop. They will also receive more direct sunlight. Both factors will contribute to faster ripening as well.

Minimum Pipe

We have said this before but it is still important while we are still waiting for spring to arrive. With this cold weather, we have to be careful with large reductions of the minimum pipe on light. The cold air that comes in falls directly to the floor. With a minimum pipe, air circulation will be sufficient and the layer of cold air around the ripening fruits will disappear as well. The minimum pipe must not increase the temperature of the plant heads. That would reduce the vigor of the heads and the new clusters. Continue to vent closely but do so in combination with a minimum pipe.